

Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2020-23

Addendum to Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+

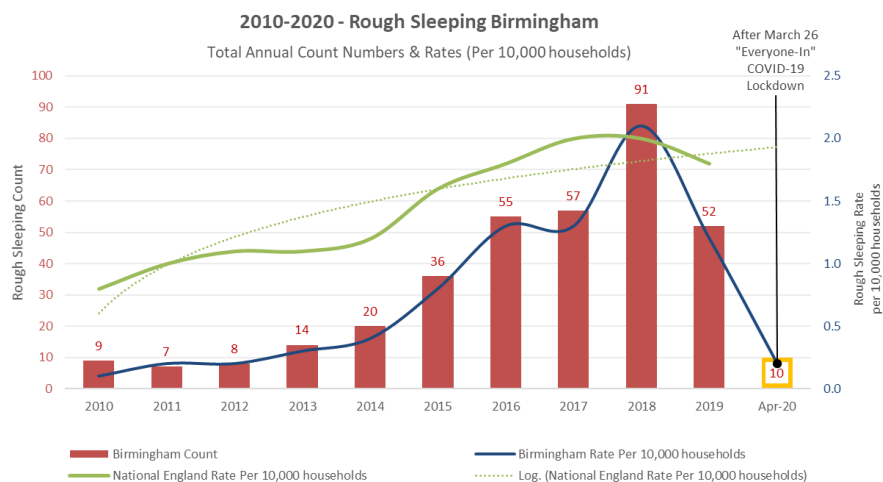
Working to together to end street homelessness



Making a positive difference everyday to people's lives



1. Where are we now?



The number of rough sleepers in Birmingham followed national trends, steadily increasing from 2011 to a peak street count in November 2018 of 91. This was followed by a reduction to 52 a year later in 2019, with local intelligence indicating a continued downward trend into 2020.

On 26th March 2020, as part of its emergency COVID-19 public health measures, the Government issued an ‘Everyone-In’ instruction to local housing authorities to accommodate all people known to their local services as rough sleeping rough. Birmingham saw and dealt with over 450 homeless presentations from ‘single adults’ over the 6-week period that followed, through outreach, additional housing advice, closing of night-shelters and increased temporary accommodation capacity. This included those traditionally excluded due to having no recourse to public funds, reducing numbers on the streets to as low as 10 people.

Whilst being the lowest in nine years, there is evidence of increased hidden need and a fear of a surge in rough sleeping as Covid-19 restrictions ease. This moment presents both opportunities and threats in terms of reducing rough sleeping for sustaining recent gains. While there are a number of services and provisions already in place, responses to preventing and relieving rough sleeping, will continue to the need to be dynamic in order to adapt to changes in operational circumstances. Prior to Covid-1, progress in these areas include: -

- Partnering and mobilising in 2018, a 3-year Housing First programme – which is supporting 91 individuals in Birmingham
- Re-commissioning an expanded outreach service
- Enhancements to Severe Weather Emergency Provision combining council, voluntary sector and faith provision

Mobilisation of accommodation and rough sleeping services including

- 52 additional emergency beds for singles & couples including provision for domestic animals.
- Targeted local investment into substance misuse support and mental health support services
- Specific provision for both, young people (under 25s) in partnership with Birmingham Children’s Trust and older adults (over 25’s) Established an outreach and support service for young people under the age 25 in partnership with Children’s Trust.

2. Rough sleeping: Priorities 2020-23

Our main objective to reduce rough sleeping is based on **embedding comprehensive targeted prevention, relief and recovery from rough sleeping, based prevention pathway approach set out in our overall Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+.**

Resourced through a combination of local, regional and national investment key principle areas of action are focussed on the following 3 pathway areas or domains -

1. Preventing someone from rough sleeping in the first place - through prevention targeted at groups and circumstances
2. Crisis Relief through expanded outreach- providing quick safe and quality interventions to get someone from the streets and into integrated accommodation and support services designed to meet their needs in a holistic and coherent way.
3. Recovery - Keeping people from the streets through an improved coordinated system of support and integrated care.

Targeted Prevention of Rough Sleeping

Embedding resilient pathways out of rough sleeping based on this principle can, only be sustained through removing and addressing gaps or barriers to existing local mainstream services, particularly for vulnerable groups at risk of multiple exclusion through targeted prevention and action for groups at greatest risk of rough sleeping.

Groups at higher risk of rough sleeping

Based on a similar approach first piloted by the Birmingham Social Housing Partnership, Birmingham has been developing joint work multi-partner local delivery plans centred around key support need cohorts, circumstances can increase the risk of rough sleeping. These plans have helped inform the commissioning and co-design of prevention pathway plans for following groups:--

- Young People (including Care Leavers and Youth Offenders)
- Prison Leavers
- Vulnerable Single Adults
- Offenders (being release from Prison)

Action to ensure those specifically leaving Armed Forces are prevented from falling into homelessness and rough sleeping, will be developed at a regional level through work of West Midlands Combined Authority. For those with no recourse to public funds, we have identified gaps precipitated by the continually changing immigration and nationality legislation frameworks in relation to migrant homelessness.

- Understanding and targeting responses to mitigate the risks of destitution and rough sleeping for this will require joint action in relation preventing homelessness amongst migrant communities as whole.

Integrating preventative health care and support.

In addition to Homelessness Reduction Act, “Duty to Refer responsibilities”, homelessness prevention partner organisations and the wider care and support sectors across the city and region, have worked together collaboratively to maximise and identify opportunities to prevent rough sleeping through better informed and designed services. A key area being developed across the housing, health and social care system includes: -

- Putting in place multi-disciplinary teams (housing, health and social care) into the work of NHS hospital discharge services covering Birmingham. Support will be offered to patients with no fixed abode or precarious housing to prevent rough sleeping and hospital re-admissions to A&E services.

2. Crisis Relief: Expanded outreach & joined up responses

The key frontline service responding to rough sleeping in Birmingham is the Rough Sleeping Outreach Service. This initiates direct contact with people who are already on the streets into accommodation through a tailored package of support which includes onward progression into settled housing. The expanded service recommissioned in 2019 provides time critical responses, to relieve the crisis of rough sleeping through a core offer, which includes rapid access to short-term accommodation and a suite of ongoing and onward support options based on the client’s needs. The new service will retain access to the range of services which already include, drug and alcohol treatment support services, and service navigators linked to Housing First.

Integrating Mental Health rough sleeping outreach

The suite of health services includes primary health (physical & mental), drug and alcohol services. Over the course of 2020 we intend to continue enhancing our core rough sleeper outreach offer through: -

- New mental health outreach services commissioned by Birmingham Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (BSOL CCG). This 5-year pilot will bring NHS-led teams (doctors, nurses and other clinicians) work together with the rough sleeping outreach service, to co-ordinate treatment and support to the street homeless population.

3. Recovery - Keeping people from the streets through an improved coordinated system of support and integrated care.

To deliver sustained reductions in rough sleeping our response needs to do more than just provide a roof. Our needs analysis used to inform this strategy and growing body of evidence indicates preventing people who have left the streets returning to rough sleeping, involves providing the right packages of personalised support to help recovery, promote independence and build personal resilience.

Over the course of the last 5-10 years homelessness prevention services across the sector in Birmingham have been pilot testing, developing and mainstreaming best practice and innovations that promote recovery-based approaches. National forerunners to this agenda include the use of frameworks, principles, approaches such

as the Outcomes Stars and the Places of Change agenda (2004). More recent developments include Trauma informed Care and Psychologically Informed Environments. Central to all these approaches is the importance of empowering people to recognise and build upon their strengths, encouraging interests and aspirations in order to make positive changes. The latest specifically in relation to rough sleeping is Housing First which is piloted in Birmingham and across the WMCA region.

Housing First pilot

Housing First is a high-fidelity model intervention aimed primarily at the most entrenched, high level of complex or multiple needs

- Deals with the immediate issue of housing
- Provides unconditional long-term personalised, holistic wrap-around housing and wellbeing for up to period of years
- Substance misuse and mental health support is provided for as long as required.

Developing recovery-based service provision

In addition to taking forward critical learning gained from an independent evaluation of the Housing First, prevention and intervention approaches rooted in recovery are being embedded through the commissioning of Housing and Wellbeing services across 4 client groups which commenced in December 2019.

As with our targeted prevention those with specific multiple needs placing them at risk of rough sleeping have been identified; young people, single adults (and couples without dependents), offenders (being released from prison), people affected by domestic abuse. accommodation and support services. The following levels of support have been commissioned to ensure no one should return to the streets:-

- lower support needs: a focus on advice and financial assistance, e.g. deposit and rental assistance to access a property, support into employment and or on-going tenancy support to sustain.
- medium support needs: provision of accommodation with support tailored to individual need.
- high and complex needs: provision of Housing First and long-term supported housing with appropriate multi-agency support.

Move-on options

Sustaining recovery from the experience of homelessness can only be achieved through longer-term actions on structural barriers around access to affordable housing and complementary investment skills and employment support. Employment support is being delivered through Birmingham's PURE project and move-on accommodation options through the BCC Housing Options service, and the council's wider actions in relation to boosting the local supply affordable housing.

Access to education, training and employment

- The PURE project is a part-funded European Social Funded project. It brings together a range of coordinated bespoke interventions which will assist the needs of citizens with barriers into the employment market. The project will be providing citizens using prevention and support services support, guidance and mentoring to individuals to access employment, education or training opportunities.

Move-On Housing Options for former rough sleepers

Specific housing-led actions required to improve access to affordable housing are:-

- Ensuring there is always an emergency bed available
- Providing access to Housing Options pathway
- Private rented sector access scheme
- Dedicated offers for Housing First
- Ensuring personal care can wrap around accommodation
- Maximising opportunities arising from Government rough sleeper capital fund 2020-24

3. Delivery, Governance and Oversight

Delivery - Rough Sleeping Manager

Given the range of services and sectors involved in working to prevent and respond to rough sleeping in the city, a BCC Rough Sleeping Manager has been appointed.

In addition to working with Homelessness Reduction Act, 'Duty to Co-operate' organisations such as health and benefits, the dedicated Rough Sleeping Manager post will provide additional accountability and a local point of contact for other key local frontline services that have regular contact with people sleeping rough such as local policing and community safety teams. This post will also help broaden collaboration between the council and the diverse range of independent organisations and individuals across the community, voluntary, faith and business sectors responding to homelessness in the city.

Oversight and Co-ordination

The governance structure concerning oversight of strategic actions in relation to rough sleeping, is set out as per page 18 of the overall Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy. Additional

oversight, co-ordination and operational delivery of priorities will be undertaken by Rough Sleepers Action Subgroup, drawing in the full range of frontline services that respond to rough sleeping across all sectors and services including housing, health and social care.

Rough Sleepers Action Sub-group

This subgroup established in January 2020 will report to Birmingham's Homelessness Partnership Board with responsibility to undertake regular (monthly) oversight of progress in delivering this strategy and as well as frontline responses to rough sleeping.

Monitoring

An interim action plan covering 2019-20 which has focussed upon operational effectiveness of rough sleeping services is to be replaced with one developed and based upon actions based upon the priority actions over the next three years. Also reflecting the impact of Covid-19. This aligns with the timespan of the city's overall Homelessness Prevention Strategy and will set out longer term actions necessary to shift our approach towards Move-On housing options for former rough sleepers, sitting alongside the delivery of Housing First and access to emergency and supported housing.