

EFFECTIVE ACTION TO END HOMELESSNESS

ADOPTING THE NO SECOND NIGHT OUT STANDARD

DEVELOPING A SERVICE OFFER
FOR THOSE NEW TO THE STREETS



EFFECTIVE ACTION TO END HOMELESSNESS...

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1 Aim of this guide	2
1.2 What is no second night out?	2
2. Developing your service offer	3
2.1 Service outline	3
2.2 Leadership and communication	5
2.3 Measuring success and learning	6
2.4 Risks	7
2.5 Service specification	8
3. Delivering against the five principles	9
3.1 Identifying new rough sleepers	9
3.2 Involving the public	10
3.3 Assessing needs quickly and safely	11
3.4 Accessing emergency accommodation and other services	12
3.5 Reconnecting to support	14
Appendix 1: Template audit table for assessing current provision and gaps	17
Appendix 2: Sample communications plan	18
Appendix 3: London assessment hub principles and process	21
Appendix 4: National rough sleeper reporting project (StreetLink)	22

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF THIS GUIDE

The aim of this guidance is to support local authorities in England, and their partner agencies, to develop a service offer for people new to the streets that meets the No Second Night Out standard. It has been updated to include examples of good practice from No Second Night Out projects around the country.

We have tried to address all aspects of developing an offer for people new to the streets. Some of these elements may already be in place in your local area. In this case, the guidance can help you to identify and fill gaps, or to consider restructuring existing services to meet the standard fully, rather than developing an entirely new offer.

1.2 WHAT IS NO SECOND NIGHT OUT?

No Second Night Out (NSNO) is a pledge made to people new to the streets and is part of a commitment to ending rough sleeping. At Homeless Link we believe that, in order to tackle rough sleeping once and for all, society needs to focus its energy on meeting four simple pledges:

1. No one new to the streets should spend a second night out
2. No one should make their home on the streets
3. No one should return to the streets once they have been helped off of them, and
4. Ultimately no one should arrive on the streets.

This guidance focuses predominantly on the first pledge, but some aspects of NSNO service delivery will address the other pledges as well.

In the strategy 'Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide' (2011), the Government called on every local authority to adopt the NSNO standard. Each community is different, so the method chosen to achieve the standard may vary, but there will be common requirements. The strategy notes that communities require the right services in place so that:

- New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle
- Members of the public should be able to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough
- Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options
- They should be able to access emergency accommodation and other services, such as healthcare, if needed
- If people have come from another area or country and find themselves sleeping rough, the aim should be to reconnect them back to their local community unless there is a good reason why they cannot return. There, they will be able to access housing and recovery services, and have support from family and friends

The Government strategy is distinct from the London No Second Night Out project, which was the first NSNO pilot. Whilst the London project shares the same principles, it is important to recognise that it is not wholly replicable and areas will need to develop locally appropriate responses.

2. DEVELOPING YOUR SERVICE OFFER

2.1 SERVICE OUTLINE

Defining your aim

Local authorities should be clear about who the service is aimed at and the gaps it is designed to fill. You will firstly need to agree on your definition of 'new to the streets'. Possible options include:

- Unknown to outreach teams
- Not previously known to outreach/local authority as a rough sleeper but seen bedded down

You also need to determine where your existing provision meets the needs of new rough sleepers and where it does not. You should do this using the five principles that form the framework for the No Second Night Out standard, as outlined in the Government's strategy 'Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide'. These five principles are:

- New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle
- Members of the public should be able to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough
- Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options
- They should be able to access emergency accommodation and other services, such as healthcare, if needed
- If people have come from another area or country and find themselves sleeping rough, the aim should be to reconnect them back to their local community unless there is a good reason why they cannot return. There, they will be able to access housing and recovery services, and have support from family and friends

You can find a template audit table at Appendix One to help you with this process.

Checklist

- ☒ **A definition of 'new rough sleeper' has been agreed**
- ☒ **Gaps or areas for development in current services have been identified**
- ☒ **The aim of the new service is clear**

Evidencing need

Once it is clear who the service is aimed at and what gaps it is looking to fill, and before developing an offer to new rough sleepers, local authorities will need to consider:

- Likely numbers involved
- Where new rough sleepers are coming from

This will inform the kind of service you need to provide, on what scale, and whether it will involve changing services locally or reconnecting people to areas where they can receive more support.

Key actions to gather intelligence on numbers and where people have come from could include:

- Audits/hot-spot counts/information from police and other relevant agencies
- Analysis of people living in hostels and night shelters
- Analysis of people using day centres, health facilities etc
- Identification of any travel patterns amongst both groups, for example sub-regional, county-wide, between major conurbations, from prisons or from abroad.

There are a number of methods that can support local authorities to collect this data. Local areas can gather information about their rough sleeping population from either a one-off snapshot or on-going audits to collate and hold data that assists those on the streets. The tools available include:

- **Street needs audits:** some local authority areas have carried out street needs audits. These are one-off snapshots that can supplement and strengthen street count data by asking for more detailed information about individuals' needs and issues, including their area of origin as well as their use of services and the reason for their homelessness.
- **The Prevention Opportunities Mapping and Planning Toolkit (PrOMPT):** PrOMPT is a toolkit that assists local authorities, their partners and the communities they serve to improve planning and commissioning of services and better identify opportunities to prevent rough sleeping. The toolkit includes guidance on how to get the relevant partners together to lead the process, an electronic audit and analysis tool, and help to produce an action plan based on the findings. For more information or to access the toolkit visit: www.homeless.org.uk/prompt
- **Homelessness service provider databases:** gathering information about clients from service provider databases gives rich data for analysis about rough sleepers and homeless people in contact with services on an on-going basis. Making sure that the systems recording data are as compatible as possible locally and share common variables about clients can help provide data to analyse trends in needs and outcomes and plan future services. For support with agreeing standardised data fields and making best use of data please see resources from Homeless Link's Critical Mass project: www.homeless.org.uk/critical-mass
- **Other service providers:** as well as homelessness providers, it can be useful to explore opportunities to analyse data about individuals collected by related support agencies, including substance misuse services, the Probation Service and Community Mental Health Teams.
- **Common multi-agency recording systems:** in some areas, common multi-agency client recording systems, like the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) database in London, have been developed. CHAIN is the most comprehensive source of information about rough sleeping available in England. It is a database used by over 80 projects (outreach teams, day centres, hostels and resettlement teams) to record all contacts and work with people sleeping rough and in the street population. Reports based on information held in CHAIN help decision-makers to monitor the needs of rough sleepers and develop strategies and services. The system also helps service provider staff to share information which ensures that they act as quickly and effectively as possible. For more information and for a summary of the kind of information collected on CHAIN see: <http://www.broadwaylondon.org/CHAIN/Reports.html>
- **Multi-agency meetings or 'task and targeting groups':** these can build the knowledge and the response to rough sleeping in a local authority area by bringing together local intelligence from both the homelessness sector and outside. Regular meetings allow on-going analysis of who is

sleeping rough, what services are being used and the hotspots to focus on, as well as multi-agency action planning for individual clients. Homeless Link is publishing a Task and Targeting Toolkit in November 2012 at: www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action

- **Intelligence gathering from Community Safety or Street Teams:** teams such as Community Safety and Safer Neighbourhood Teams, as well as those responsible for street cleansing or traffic/parking, can offer 24-hour feedback and local areas can arrange for regular updates from these teams to inform the planning of outreach services. This is of particular value in areas that do not have daily street outreach services and a large area to cover.

Checklist

- ☒ **Methods exist for multi-agency intelligence gathering/data sharing**
- ☒ **The common routes of new rough sleepers on to the street have been identified**
- ☒ **An approximate number of new rough sleepers has been assessed**

2.2 LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

To make your service successful at a time of decentralisation, you need to have appropriate local political and strategic support in order to:

1. Agree the protocol for identifying and assessing those who are new to the streets
2. Agree on the delivery of single service offers for those who are new to the streets
3. Get everyone to buy into the single service offer
4. Create urgency around achieving this offer.

A **single service offer** is the clear message that will be given to individual rough sleepers. It should be credible and realistic, based on assessment and include the support required to ensure that the individual will not sleep rough in your area or elsewhere. It can include a reconnection (an offer of accommodation elsewhere, not simply a ticket home) or an offer of accommodation locally and must be reiterated across agencies. This reduces the risk of an individual continuing to sleep rough with the expectation of getting a better offer.

Open and widespread communication is vital to achieving consistent protocols for identifying, assessing and delivering clear single service offers to new rough sleepers. Local authorities should devise a communication strategy setting out the consultation mechanisms, key messages and planned activities in respect of the various target audiences. Target audiences should include:

- Other local authorities
- Relevant police and UKBA teams
- Hospitals and prisons
- General public – residents and businesses
- Homelessness charities and faith groups supporting the homeless
- Current rough sleepers

A sample communication plan outlining the purpose of communicating with each stakeholder, risks and methods is available at Appendix Two. It is advisable to produce clear key messages about the service you are developing to share with stakeholders, along with some responses to some common

questions and a process to deal with feedback, including complaints. For an example of responses to common questions see London NSNO:

www.nosecondnightout.org.uk/faqs/

Get support from your Regional Manager: www.homeless.org.uk/regional-contacts and use our Local Influencing toolkit to help gain political support for the single service offer:

www.homeless.org.uk/local-influencing

Brighton & Hove

CRI deliver NSNO as well as outreach services to more entrenched rough sleepers. They have taken steps to build relationships with the local housing department by briefing staff about the NSNO project. This has helped to open up discussion about referring clients into housing and whether access to hard-to-let council stock could be an option.

Lincolnshire

Framework has developed the first outreach service across Lincolnshire, including rural and coastal regions. In urban areas staff have met with businesses and people linked to universities, nightclubs, car park, retail parks etc. They promote the outreach service but also highlight the difference between, for example, rough sleepers and other parts of the street population or night time economy. This raises awareness about different needs and responses as well as encouraging referrals e.g. from taxi drivers.

Checklist for section

- ☒ **The service links to relevant local strategies**
- ☒ **All relevant local agencies support the service**
- ☒ **Local agencies know who to contact if they have questions about the service**
- ☒ **There is political backing for the service**
- ☒ **The media report positively on the service**

2.3 MEASURING SUCCESS AND LEARNING

As with all services, you should consider from the outset how you will agree a baseline, review progress and measure success. This means setting up effective, user-friendly systems that include data (e.g. demographics), outputs (e.g. number of referrals received) and outcomes (e.g. what difference the service made to clients). You may wish to set targets such as:

- The number of clients referred, as a proportion of all new rough sleepers
- The percentage of people not spending a second night out
- Length of time between identification and assessment
- Length of time between assessment and single service offer
- Immediate and longer term outcomes for client (including those returning to the street)
- Number of clients who refuse the single service offer
- Satisfaction of general public who refer rough sleepers

To set realistic targets and identify the success of the service you will need to ensure you have a baseline for each target. The baseline should reflect current provision, with which to compare the new offer.

London

The CHAIN database ensures robust data collection, and showed that new rough sleepers who attended the London hub were far more likely to go into accommodation or be reconnected than those who did not. In the first six months, just under two thirds (63%) of new rough sleepers attending the hub moved into accommodation or were reconnected, in comparison with only 15% of those who did not attend the hub.

Feedback from phone line and website referrals

People who make referrals to NSNO phone lines and websites can request feedback. For data protection and confidentiality reasons the feedback will only be brief – if the person was helped, not found or already known to services – but it shows the referrer that their call/email led to action and was time well spent. This increases the likelihood that they will use the service again, talk about it to other people, or use social media to share the service. Service plans, targets and reviews should include this feedback.

In addition to measuring the success, every opportunity should be taken to consider what is being learned through the service and to determine how this can be used to improve the offer in future.

Checklist for section

- ☒ The outcomes and outputs have been identified
- ☒ Appropriate targets have been set
- ☒ An agreed monitoring system is in place

2.4 RISKS

Ensure you assess potential risks of your service and put a plan in place to mitigate them. You should assess both the likelihood of a risk occurring and the likely impact if it does. Don't forget to involve partner agencies when looking at actions to manage risk, for example by establishing a protocol to request mental health assessments or by speaking to local people at Safer Neighbourhoods Team community forums. Use the following matrix to calculate the risk rating.

Likelihood				
	↑	Low	Medium	High
		Low	Medium	High
		Low	Medium	High
		Impact →		
High		MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
Medium		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Low		LOW	LOW	MEDIUM

A risk register has been developed alongside this guide to help you: www.homeless.org.uk/rs-guide

Checklist for section

- ☒ Potential risks have been identified
- ☒ Actions to mitigate risks have been assigned

2.5 SERVICE SPECIFICATION

With all of the above elements in place, you can now develop a service specification outlining exactly what your service offer is. This should include:

- Summary service description
- Aims and objectives of the service
- Target outputs and outcomes
- Monitoring process
- Timeline for development

You will also need to include your proposed delivery methods. For guidance on developing these, see section 3 below.

3. DELIVERING AGAINST THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

In this section of the guide we describe options for delivering your service offer. It is separated into the five principles on which the No Second Night Out (NSNO) standard is based:

- New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle (3.1)
- Members of the public should be able to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough (3.2)
- Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options (3.3)
- They should be able to access emergency accommodation and other services, such as healthcare, if needed (3.4)
- If people have come from another area or country and find themselves sleeping rough, the aim should be to reconnect them back to their local community unless there is a good reason why they cannot return. There, they will be able to access housing and recovery services, and have support from family and friends (3.5)

3.1 IDENTIFYING NEW ROUGH SLEEPERS

In order to achieve the NSNO standard, it is vital that rough sleepers are identified as soon as they spend a first night out. Where there is limited outreach provision, local authorities will need to consider how this can be achieved. This may mean reconfiguring an existing service, supplementing an existing service or developing a new one entirely. It will also involve working in partnership with other services that see rough sleepers, such as day centres, police, hospitals, community safety and local authority street services. Where additional resources are required, protocols may be necessary to outline changes to current provision and any extra expectations. Such a protocol would need to include information on:

- Agreed changes to practice e.g. outreach rotas, protocols, responses and recording times
- Expectation of how partner agencies will report new rough sleepers
- The target group and criteria for accessing the service
- The single service offer and key messages to new rough sleepers
- Arrangements for transport to a location for assessment
- Timescales involved
- Accountability and monitoring requirements

It is vital to involve the public in reporting and referring rough sleepers for support. See section 3.2 for information on this.

Liverpool

Liverpool NSNO uses day centre-based assessment hubs during the day and a hostel-based sit-up service overnight. While anyone can attend the Hub, only new rough sleepers, those with an imminent accommodation offer or those found rough sleeping for the first time in 12 months are eligible for the sit-up service. It has been a challenge to define this eligibility in order to meet clients' needs but avoid the sit-up service turning into a night shelter. Hub staff aim to find a solution for clients as quickly as possible, with a target of 3 nights maximum stay in the sit-up service.

3.2 INVOLVING THE PUBLIC

Involving the public in reporting/referring people sleeping rough to connect them with local services is important to assist with early identification and requires a simple and consistent publicity campaign. It is important to involve the public because a service cannot get intelligence on rough sleeping across its whole area without encouraging the community to become its 'eyes and ears.' It is important to change perceptions in order for local people to treat rough sleeping as an emergency that requires an intervention, in a similar way to calling an ambulance for a medical emergency. You will need to consider:

- The method by which people will refer
- How to ensure feedback to those referring
- How you will publicise the referral method

Please see details of StreetLink, the national rough sleeping reporting project, at Appendix Three.

Referral method

This could be a phone line, website or combination of the two. Whichever method you choose, you will need to consider how it will be staffed and at what times. You will also need to plan and develop the response you will offer based on the referral information. Key quality indicators should be around the response given and the feedback to the caller.

Greater Manchester

Riverside ECHG coordinates NSNO across Greater Manchester. Riverside ECHG already had a call centre as part of its housing support function, and built on this service in order to establish a 24-hour phone line for rough sleeper referrals.

Although there is now a national reporting project, it is still vital that local areas develop their own specific approaches to identifying and assessing rough sleeping. Where this approach includes a local referral mechanism, StreetLink works with local agencies to ensure that national and local mechanisms complement each other, for example by directing web referrals or patching through calls (see Appendix Three).

Giving feedback

You will need to devise a method of giving feedback to the public on the outcome of their referrals. This helps people to feel that their efforts have an impact and makes them more likely to refer again. Giving feedback requires staff to keep a log of all referral information, as well as being able to access outcome information for each referral.

StreetLink

When people make a referral to the national rough sleeper reporting project, StreetLink, they are offered the opportunity of receiving feedback. If requested they are contacted by phone or email with details of what happened following their referral. This feedback is brief and does not compromise confidentiality or data protection.

Publicising the method

NSNO services are designed to enable the general public to report rough sleepers, therefore they need to be publicised as widely as possible. Consider using local newspapers and websites, and displaying information in popular places such as shops, post offices and churches. Homeless Link has produced a Local Influencing Toolkit to help services to promote their work, develop partnerships and make connections with decision-makers and media in their area:

www.homeless.org.uk/local-influencing

Kent & Medway

Porchlight launched their Kent and Medway reactive outreach service with the campaign ‘Don’t Just Walk Past’, which included the use of social media networks and local radio advertising. Calls to their phone line increased from 700 to 1000 calls per month, requiring additional staffing.

3.3 ASSESSING NEEDS QUICKLY AND SAFELY

Where and when

New rough sleepers should have their needs assessed and options identified quickly and safely to prevent them remaining on the streets. All local authorities need a means to do this as soon as possible after a rough sleeper has been referred. As referrals are likely to be made when people are seen sleeping out, this means any response must be available late at night, early mornings or throughout the night. The extent to which this is currently available will differ, but local authorities should consider an appropriate location to deliver this service. This could include using the office base of an existing outreach service, a day centre, drop-in or advice service, a night shelter or direct access accommodation.

Wherever the assessments will take place, there are essential criteria:

- Staffing experience and levels to enable quick and thorough assessments
- Adequate private space for assessments
- Relevant insurance etc to deliver a service
- Accessibility at times when rough sleepers are likely to be referred
- Access to a phone (including the ability to make international calls) and computer to check numbers and addresses and verify information given
- Language should not be a barrier: use of telephone translation, staff/volunteers with language skills and/or basic online tools such as Google Translate is a must.

Local authorities will also need a process for transporting clients to the assessment. This is a particular issue for NSNO projects covering large geographical areas or responding to rough sleeping in rural locations.

In London, the pilot project established a fit-for-purpose assessment hub to fulfil this role. Where this approach is taken, steps must be taken to ensure that appropriate governance structures are in place. Elsewhere projects have used space in existing services such as day centres and hostels, often with dedicated staff teams so that NSNO work is separate and new rough sleepers receive a timely service.

London

London NSNO’s 24-7 assessment hub model has significant advantages. Outreach teams appreciate the lack of bureaucracy to access it and referrals are routinely made between the hours of 6pm to 3am. The hub has no beds and is located away from areas with high concentrations of rough sleepers. This has had a positive impact on the pilot’s outcomes and enabled staff to reduce the risk of people from outside London, who are being made an offer of reconnection, being drawn into the more established rough sleeping population. Part of the learning from the project’s first year was that a separate space was needed for women and more vulnerable clients.

Liverpool

Liverpool NSNO uses two day centres (Whitechapel Centre and Basement Advisory Service) as assessment hubs during the day and evening. This has the advantage of access to existing services and staff teams with knowledge of services and proven skills in engaging clients. The communal areas of three hostels are used in rotation for the sit-up service. NSNO staff accompany clients between the services.

Thought should also be given as to whether there are problems associated with carrying out assessments where other homeless clients or rough sleepers are present or nearby. Mixing new rough sleepers with those already on the streets can cause tensions, weaken the message of the single service offer, and encourage clients to become involved in existing street activity.

How

The process of assessment should be made clear, including the means by which clients will be prioritised and how any immediate urgent needs, such as healthcare, will be identified and addressed. Most importantly in terms of reconnection, assessment must include the following:

- Correct identity and demographics (ensuring name and DOB are precise)
- Immigration status and whether the client has entitlement to public funds, including how long they have been in the UK
- Support needs (such as mental and physical health and substance use)
- Full housing history over 5 years (ideally this will include accurate dates, full addresses and the LA areas these fall within)
- 'Flow' information (what was the last settled home, other places they have stayed and why accommodation was lost)
- Risk assessment, as this will be required to refer people on to other services
- Signed consent to store and share information.

Assessing the client is only a starting point and any protocol must provide for the verification of information. With such a tight timescale, it is crucial to verify quickly the information that you have received, both to ensure the details are correct (i.e. accurate dates), to get formal confirmation in writing (i.e. medical information from GP) and to ascertain if there are any support needs/risk not disclosed by the client. This should be done as soon as soon as possible. Faxed and emailed requests can be sent at night to be followed up first thing.

Additional Homeless Link guidance documents are available to help services with assessment and understanding which entitlements are available for different client groups:

- [Reconnecting Rough Sleepers](#)
- [Supporting People with No Recourse to Public Funds](#)
- [Working with Refugees](#)

3.4 ACCESSING EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER SERVICES

You will need to have processes in place to respond to any immediate needs identified during the assessment process, such as healthcare. Service level agreements setting out the needs and expectations between NSNO and partner services, with clear communication and referral procedures, can support consistent partnership working.

You will also need to ensure you have an appropriate local offer to make to people new to rough sleeping who have a local connection to your area or where it will take time to reconnect. This will include accommodation and support, and may require emergency or interim accommodation in the first instance. Emergency accommodation could be ring-fenced beds in existing hostels/night shelters or utilising available space e.g. several camp beds in the communal area of a hostel. A number of funding options are currently in use:

- Housing Benefit
- Local Authority uses the Homelessness Grant to fund ring-fenced beds
- Accommodation provider funds ring-fenced beds within their service
- Outreach team funds an accommodation service to ring-fence a bed

In most areas of England there are not enough bed spaces available through hostels or social housing to meet demand. Services have to look at a range of move-on options for clients coming through NSNO to ensure that people are not in temporary sit-up services for an unreasonable length of time, and that their move on is right for them e.g. ensuring that people who can live independently do not end up in a supported project. When looking at move on, the following options should be considered:

- Hostels or supported housing
- Young people's foyers
- Specialist supported housing e.g. projects for long term drinkers
- Sheltered housing for clients over pension age
- Nursing homes
- Residential detox and rehab
- Non-statutory projects e.g. Emmaus live/work communities
- Mediation and support to return to the family home or other previous accommodation, whether locally or via supported reconnection.

For detailed guidance on resettlement see: www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/resettlement

For guidance and resources from Crisis on accessing the private rented sector, including a list of schemes, see: www.privaterentedsector.org.uk/

Experience from NSNO projects shows that advocacy with Housing Options is often essential to get a positive outcome for homeless people, many of whom have been turned away previously without receiving the support to which they are entitled. Even where a local authority has no duty to house someone, they have a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance. Services will need to look at developing robust support for clients to attend Housing Options, for example:

- Resources (time, staffing and budget) to accompany clients to Housing Options
- Training staff or volunteers in basic housing law and processes in order to advocate effectively

Guidance is available to help local authorities meet their duty to non-statutory homeless people: www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/providing-advice-and-assistance

London

Staff accompany clients to LAs wherever possible, often because the client is vulnerable and may find it hard to communicate relevant information. The worker also helps the client to understand any offer of advice and assistance given, and encourage them to prepare a plan of action so they do not return to the streets.

Liverpool

Liverpool City Council has taken a proactive approach to ensuring that emergency accommodation and support is available to those who are rough sleeping in the city. They have ring-fenced beds in existing provision, into which 94 people were placed in 2010/11. Of these, 77 had only one placement. They also operate a private rented sector enablement service, which offers six months' intensive support in addition to floating support.

Kent & Medway

Due to the large geographical reach of Porchlight's reactive outreach service, workers usually see rough sleepers at the point of need, rather than using a fixed assessment hub. However they also utilise links with local day centres, for example taking people with mental health needs to Catching Lives in Canterbury where a Community Psychiatric Nurse on the staff team can assist with access to mental health services.

Lincolnshire

Framework seeks to build relationships with private sector landlords to increase their confidence in accepting homeless people as tenants. They offer incentives to landlords in exchange for allocation stock to their clients, for example paying for gas safety certificates or agreeing Housing Benefit payments to the landlord.

London

Outreach teams and housing officers have expressed concern that they do not have the facilities to accommodate some rough sleepers, particularly those with low support needs. In order to provide a speedy resolution they may be using inappropriate solutions which may jeopardise the longer term success. NSNO staff have had difficulties getting a response from out-of-hours services, often having to call multiple times. Access to local private rented schemes for non-priority individuals is also problematic. For those who are accepted, waiting lists and the requirement to have proof of benefits can mean long waits. In response, NSNO has developed 'staging post' accommodation, which is still temporary but suitable for longer stays than the 72-hour target for the sit-up assessment hub.

For case studies highlighting examples of where third sector and local authorities have found alternative solutions to emergency accommodation visit:

<http://homeless.org.uk/emergency-accommodation-project>

3.5 RECONNECTING TO SUPPORT

The purpose of reconnection is to support rough sleepers, particularly those who are new to the streets, to return in a planned way to an area where they have a connection such as accommodation, employment opportunities or support networks. Used in isolation, reconnection will not be sufficient to tackle rough sleeping. However, when developed as part of a local authority's overall approach to tackling rough sleeping and homelessness it can be extremely effective in ensuring that people do not remain in insecure housing or on the streets. Detailed practical guidance on reconnection is available here:

<http://homeless.org.uk/effective-action/Reconnectingroughsleepers>

Reconnection with family or significant others may, in some cases, offer an early intervention that helps rough sleepers off the streets. Before contacting agencies in the rough sleeper's local area, a conversation might be had with them about whether they have family that they might be able to return to or stay with. If a rough sleeper wants support in reconnecting with family that they are out of touch

with, the charity Missing People offer free 24-hour confidential support, help and advice by phone, email and text, including the opportunity to reconnect by exchanging messages or being supported in their reconnection via a 3-way call involving Missing People's helpline staff. They can be contacted on 116000.

Reconnecting rough sleepers to their home area works best where the local housing authority and their voluntary sector partners develop a robust and multi-agency policy, which sets out roles and responsibilities within an agreed framework.

London

In the first six months the majority of people returned to services in their home area. For more than half (56%) this reconnection was within London, mostly to central boroughs. Just 13% returned to the rest of the UK. Almost one third (31%) of reconnections were outside the UK.

To develop an effective reconnection response, local authorities need to:

- Work with other local authorities/areas
- Agree the reconnection actions to be taken
- Agree on eligibility for reconnection.

London

Feedback from some local authorities receiving reconnections from the NSNO team is that they feel put under pressure by the service. This is not surprising given the fast turnaround that the assessment hub seeks to achieve. The target assessment time of 72 hours requires faster response times from all parties concerned, requiring a change in working culture for many agencies in the homelessness sector.

In order to undertake reconnection activities successfully it is important that staff think creatively and provide each individual with a tailored service, building a relationship quickly in order to be both challenging and supportive. A high degree of advocacy is required to ensure that receiving services respond quickly enough to ensure somebody does not spend a second night out in your area or another. Depending on levels of rough sleeping, local authorities may decide to either develop a specific post or team, or increase the expertise and remit of an existing team, such as outreach, day centre or hostel staff.

A healthy direct expenditure budget is required to pay for travel and other expenses.

For detailed guidance, focused on UK nationals, see the Good Practice Note on Developing Reconnection Policies for Rough Sleepers: www.homeless.org.uk/reconnection

Where rough sleepers are from outside the UK, a different response will be needed. Guidance on reconnecting migrant rough sleepers from within the European Economic Area (EEA) is included in this guidance: www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/EEAresponseandoffer.

For other migrants, see the guidance 'Supporting People with No Recourse to Public Funds': www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/nrpf

Homeless Link has also developed a reconnection portal. This is a bank of resources for local authorities and other agencies involved in reconnecting rough sleepers to their home areas. It includes information on what reconnection is, good practice in how to do it well, template documents to support the process, and a search facility to help locate services in those home areas.

It also features case studies from people who have been through the reconnection process:

www.reconnect.homeless.org.uk/

London

In its first six months, 59% of rough sleepers referred into the hub were non-UK nationals. 26% were from Central and Eastern Europe. The successful partnership with Thames Reach's London Reconnection Service has been crucial in assisting EU nationals to return home safely in a planned and supported way. The hub had success where it allowed people to think about the offer of supported reconnection overnight, or even return and subsequently take up the offer. However there continues to be a gap in some teams to provide the offer or reiterate a constant message due to language barriers.

APPENDIX 1: TEMPLATE AUDIT TABLE FOR ASSESSING CURRENT PROVISION AND GAPS

Principle area	Current provision	Strengths	Weaknesses	Need or scope for development?
Identifying new rough sleepers	<i>e.g. outreach team</i>	<i>e.g. knowledge of common sites</i>	<i>e.g. only operates 3 nights per week</i>	<i>e.g. yes – rotas</i>
Involving the public				
Assessing needs quickly and safely				
Accessing emergency services				
Reconnecting to support				

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Target Audience	Purpose of communication	Risks/issues	Methods of engagement (and risk reduction)	Lead	Date
Local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that they are clear about the expectations on them linked to the reconnections To ensure that the aims of the pilot and its parameters are well understood and supported To ensure that they have places available into which local rough sleepers can be moved or reconnected in a short space of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That commissioned services or LAs undermine or do not hear the messages attached to NSNO That some LAs do not have appropriate emergency accommodation to which local rough sleepers can be reconnected That some LAs do not fulfil their responsibilities after reconnection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Letter for distribution to all local authorities Promotion of reconnections protocol via produced briefing Work on supporting LAs to develop emergency accommodation options Use of on-line reconnections portal Use of evidence about new rough sleepers to provide data to approach relevant LAs 		
Police authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that, in their contact with rough sleepers or those otherwise street active, they are clear about the NSNO messages and aims To ensure that they provide support to outreach teams in tackling rough sleeping To ensure that they provide timely information when needed to enable speedy and safe assessment of needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Police services are not clear about the pilot and therefore not supporting its aims That Police teams do not provide the resources to outreach teams that they need That the assessment staff cannot get the information they need 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogue with police 		
UKBA and Local Immigration Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that Local Immigration Teams are clear that there may be a call on their resources and powers from outreach teams to assist with tackling rough sleeping To ensure that Local Immigration Teams are clear about the NSNO messages and aims To ensure that UKBA can provide timely information when needed to the assessment hub to enable speedy and safe assessment of needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Local Immigration Teams are not clear about the pilot and therefore not supporting its aims That Local Immigration Teams do not provide the resources to local teams that they need That the assessment staff cannot get the information they need on immigration status and related issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogue with UKBA staff Awareness raising of NSNO pilot with Local Immigration Teams 		

Target Audience	Purpose of communication	Risks/issues	Methods of engagement (and risk reduction)	Lead	Date
Hospitals and Prisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That those responsible for discharge planning are aware of the importance of ensuring that people have accommodation on exit to avoid potential for rough sleeping That those responsible for discharge planning are aware of the NSNO pilot and can advise those departing accordingly That hospitals and prisons can access the information they need to reconnect people with home area or some form of accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The poor discharge processes and/or lack of the right information means that people are discharged onto the streets That the wrong messages are given to those leaving prison or hospital that undermine the aims of the pilot 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogue with hospitals Dialogue with prisons Briefing for relevant hospital trusts and prisons setting out aims of the pilot and where they can get the information they need Refer to guidance on hospital discharge http://homeless.org.uk/news/hospitals-discharging-homeless-people-street 		
General public, businesses and residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the NSNO project helps outreach teams speedily identify and contact new rough sleepers by improving the reach and scope of current intelligence from the general public, businesses and residents To ensure that the general public, businesses and residents are aware of – and are supportive of – the aims of the NSNO project To provide feedback to those offering information to increase awareness of the options available for rough sleepers and the involvement of many non-rough sleepers in street-based activity like begging/street drinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the public, residents or businesses provide too much/poor quality information that acts as a distraction to outreach teams in responding to real rough sleepers That the public, residents or businesses do not understand or support the aims of the NSNO pilot and therefore do not participate as intended or act in a way that undermines the success of the pilot (e.g. more soup runs) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Media launch of the NSNO project will raise awareness in all three groups Use existing local residents and business fora to promote the pilot and its aims Ensure that those providing intelligence get good feedback 		

Target Audience	Purpose of communication	Risks/issues	Methods of engagement (and risk reduction)	Lead	Date
Charities and faith groups providing non-commissioned services or support to rough sleepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that these groups can support the success of the pilot by providing speedy intelligence about the whereabouts of new rough sleepers To ensure that new rough sleepers and those facing rough sleeping as a prospect are given accurate information about the service offer that will be available to them That these groups are encouraged to undertake activities that are supportive of the aims of the pilot (e.g. volunteering to assist with assessments, providing food during assessments rather than on the streets) and do not undermine its success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That these groups provide too much/poor quality information that acts as a distraction to outreach teams in responding to real rough sleepers That these groups are not aware of (or supportive of) the aims of the pilot and act either inadvertently or deliberately to undermine its success That volunteer support is not available 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Media launch of the service Careful promotion of pilot and its aims with targeted providers of services with the aim of securing volunteer input as well as general promotion of the pilot's aims Ensure that those providing intelligence get good feedback Seek volunteers to spread message and support assessment and outreach roles 		
Rough sleepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the intention behind the NSNO pilot (and its key messages about reconnection and single service offer) are widely understood To ensure that rough sleepers understand who is eligible for NSNO and what the offer is for those who are not new to the streets To ensure that new rough sleepers know where to get help To ensure that rough sleepers are clear about the intention to end rough sleeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That rough sleepers are given mixed messages and unrealistic expectations about the offer of help they will get That new rough sleepers are not contacted on their first night out That the aims of the pilot and its link to the wider strategy are misunderstood 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Launch through the media of the service Information disseminated by outreach teams, day centres and soup run providers Briefings for faith groups/charities 		

See also: <http://homeless.org.uk/local-influencing>

APPENDIX 3: LONDON ASSESSMENT HUB

PRINCIPLES AND PROCESS

ETHOS AND VALUES OF LONDON PILOT

- The assessment centre is NOT a day centre and it is NOT a night shelter
- The centre is a fully staffed and safe environment off the street where new rough sleepers can be brought 24/7 to get their individual needs assessed and take action to remove the need for someone to continue to sleep rough
- The centre cannot force people to take up its options but it will provide a credible and real offer for someone in order that they do not need to continue to sleep rough
- The assessment centre is a place of support, intervention and action
- The assessment centre will conduct a thorough and comprehensive needs assessment and will fully involve the client at every stage of this.
- Clients have the right to appeal and complain about the service received from the centre
- Staff will treat clients with respect and ensure equality of access for all its service users
- Client cases will be treated with urgency

ASSESSMENT

Assessment induction checklist

A holistic assessment needs to be completed. Based on the assessment, a realistic and appropriate offer of support will be offered. This is a checklist for arrival at the hub:

- ✓ Welcome
- ✓ Take additional information from outreach worker where given
- ✓ Immediate risk assessment (visual and based on immediate concerns flagged and made obvious)
- ✓ Explain the purpose and function of the assessment
- ✓ Show the person around and explain how the centre works
- ✓ Explain the expectations and local neighbourhood policy
- ✓ Ensure they are seen by an assessment worker as soon as possible

Leaving the assessment hub

If a client refuses the single service offer made, they must leave and will therefore be at risk of returning to the street. The assessment staff will ensure that the referring outreach team is immediately notified if this is the case and that details of the service offer are clearly communicated to other agencies so that they know what service has been offered, the reason for refusal and any further action recommended.

It is expected that the outreach team will then follow through on the agreed actions, including a reinforcement of the reconnections offer made (repeating the offer as necessary) and pursuing local assertive actions and enforcement measures if appropriate.

For a template assessment form see:

<http://homeless.org.uk/effective-action/Reconnectingroughsleepers>

APPENDIX 4: STREETLINK – NATIONAL ROUGH SLEEPING REPORTING PROJECT

[StreetLink](#) is the national rough sleeping reporting project. The website went live in October 2012 and the phone line will be launched in December 2012. As part of the project's development, an Options Paper was circulated to those areas that already had a reporting system.

The Options Paper is included here to help local authorities think about their provision and how this can be aligned with the national project. Please contact the StreetLink Development Manager for further advice and support in developing your local response.

STREETLINK BRIEFING AND OPTIONS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

In December 2011, Grant Shapps announced that he was going to launch a national telephone line and website for the public to tell local authorities and charities about rough sleepers in their neighbourhoods. The minister's ambition in delivering this national service is to offer the public a means to act when they see someone sleeping rough and provide a level of public scrutiny of the local action being taken to tackle rough sleeping. Homeless Link and Broadway were appointed to set up the national telephone line and website.

This briefing provides an overview of how the project fits with funding made available to local authorities to ensure frontline provision prevents single homelessness and rough sleeping via Sub-Regional Partnerships across the country and with the Homelessness Transition Fund (HTF) for not for profit agencies, set up as part of the Government's rough sleeping strategy.

The rough sleeping reporting project

The aim of this project is to prevent and reduce rough sleeping and single homelessness through identification and local accountability. The objectives are to:

- Gather information on what the individual local authority and commissioned service responsibilities, routes and offers are in each English Local Authority area
- Give members of the public, services and rough sleepers themselves the means to tell the local authority about rough sleeping via website by October 2012 and a 24/7 telephone line in December 2012
- Ensure that each referral is passed on to the appropriate Local Housing Authority or a designated partner for appropriate action
- Provide basic feedback to anyone referring a rough sleeper on the action taken within 10 working days (simply that action is taken, the rough sleeper is known or they were unable to be found)
- Establish a national web-based system and database where rough sleeper locations and outcomes are publicly and transparently (but anonymously) available
- Use the information gathered to highlight good practice and improve systems for dealing with rough sleeping in England.

The link with LA sub regional partnerships and the HTF

This project has some clear crossover with the work being carried out within the Sub Regional Partnerships of local authorities and the aims of the HTF. This includes local aims to ensure that people who are rough sleeping are identified, assessed and supported. Both applicants to the HTF and local authority Sub-Regional Partnerships have launched, or are working towards the development of, local reporting arrangements including telephone lines and websites, and may also have plans to or are investing in publicity and communications.

It is still vital that local areas develop their own specific approaches to identifying and assessing rough sleeping. Where this local approach includes a local referral mechanism, StreetLink will work with you to ensure the national and local mechanisms complement each other.

The website and phone line being developed as part of the National Rough Sleeping Reporting Project have a clear benefit for local areas, especially as they will provide 24/7 coverage. This necessitates close and ongoing communication between local authorities and their agencies developing local responses and Homeless Link as the lead agency on the national structure.

To assist the national and local mechanisms to work cohesively together we would like to work with you to establish the best way to coordinate telephone and web referrals from the national response with your local systems for responding to rough sleepers. We want to discuss with you how you would like the national line to be publicised locally and how this can be incorporated with any current or planned publicity for the existing local line.

Options for local areas and services

1. Web referrals

When a referral is received through the national website, what would be the preferred method for it to be passed through to the current local service?

- a) A referral email generated by the national website and sent automatically to a designated address where it can be picked up by the local service.
- b) When a referral is received through the national website the details are passed through to local service by telephone call (this option available from December)
- c) Both options happen at the same time

We are also planning to ensure that if there is insufficient information in the referral submission that is sent to a local area, you will have the option to request further information and we can follow this up with the referrer. From September however this can only take place within office hours, so local areas can also follow up themselves where contact details are provided.

2. Telephone referrals

When a referral is received through the national telephone line, what would be the preferred method for it to be passed through to the current local system?

- a) Line operators at the national line receive the referral call and are then able to patch this through to the relevant local line using the telephone system
- b) Details of the referral are taken by national line and then passed to the local line by a separate telephone call from the line operator
- c) Details of the referral are taken by the national line and then passed to the local response by email

3. Publicity

How would do you envisage any local publicity you undertake for any current or planned local response working together with the national service?

- a) National website and line only publicised in your area
- b) Both national and local line publicised in your area e.g. using national line/website for out of hours use
- c) Local line but national website publicised
- d) National line and local website publicised
- e) Only local website and line publicised in your area
- f) Use a version of the national brand that can be adapted for a local service.

4. Feedback to referrers

The project aims to give feedback within 10 working days to all referrers who leave contact details. As stated above, it will deal sensitively with issues of confidentiality. We are contacting all local areas to find out how we will work with you to get the feedback and in particular the key point of contact.

In areas where there is a referral system in place there are likely to be two options:

- a) You provide us with information on the action taken and we give feedback to the referrer
- b) You provide feedback directly to the referrer and let us know you have done this so we can update our system

We will also discuss with you how we put people directly in contact with you when they call often or in a professional capacity and require a more nuanced response.

Information gathering

The national project will be gathering the following core data:

- Type of referrer
- Local authority area
- Location
- Name
- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Action taken

We will discuss with areas who have a local response how to combine local data with the full dataset, in order to look at the national picture and measure trends over time and to ensure that we are collecting a cohesive set of national data. The core data set largely mirrors the information collated by established local responses and we would advise local services who are developing systems to collect the same core data from referrals, where possible.

Contact

If you want to discuss this further please contact:

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